

Talbot County Tourism Board
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 10, 2019
8:30 a.m.
215 Bay Street, Conference Room #1, Easton, MD 21601

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Judy Bixler called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

Board Members Present: Judy Bixler, John Booth, Kelley Cox, Angela Eade, Ian Fleming, Harold Klinger, Mark Salter, Jeff Schneider, Al Silverstein, Cassandra Vanhooser, Kim Weller

Board Members Absent: Tracey Johns, Laura Price, Ben Simons, Waitman Vanorsdale

Recording Secretary: Candace Harris

Staff: Samuel Shoge

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the March 2019 meeting were presented. Harold Klinger moved that the minutes be accepted as written. John Booth seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

III. Old Business

Talbot Restaurant Week, April 7-13: Ms. Vanhooser noted that Restaurant Week 2019 was underway and she encouraged board members to make plans to dine at one of the participating restaurants. She noted that the advertising campaign includes interviews of chefs on WCEI radio. Mark Salter and Kelly Cox both participated in TV interviews and ads are running in the Star Democrat and on television via Comcast.

Stories of the Chesapeake Cookbook: Ms. Vanhooser distributed copies of the cookbook to board members. She noted that it is a fundraiser for the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area and will be selling for \$20. Board members were very impressed with the finished product and offered Ms. Vanhooser suggestions on how to sell it. Ms. Eade said that the stores in St. Michaels would probably love to sell them. Mr. Silverstein asked Ms. Vanhooser to send him a pdf and he would send out an e-blast about the cookbook. He also said to have Ms. Owings get in touch with WBOC about doing the show where they feature chefs. Mr. Booth suggested putting copies in the CBMM store. Ms. Vanhooser said that we will be doing some PR around it.

Hill Community Project: Ms. Vanhooser reported that the brochure is in production now and has been rewritten. The website is being produced and should be finished soon. There was a problem with the signage with the Town of Easton. They felt they were too large and there were too many signs so they didn't approve them. The community is restructuring the plan and thinking of making the signs as a traveling exhibit. The project is moving forward.

Travel Guide: The guide will be published in May and distributed with the June edition of *Chesapeake Bay Magazine*, which mails on May 15. Advertising has been down this year, and Ms. Vanhooser asked the Board if they had any insight. Ms. Eade said that the sales staff emailed as if they already had the sale made. They did not give them enough time to pay for the advertisements and did not offer any suggestions like paying over a period of time. Ms. Vanhooser said that she would address this issue with the publisher, John Stefancik. She also reported that the Guide would be going out to RFP next year. She asked the Board if they wanted to open it up to realtors to cover the shortage of ads. There were several suggestions such as having a realtor's page but the Board decided to revisit the issue next year.

H.B. 844/ S.B. 533: Ms. Vanhooser reported that this bill passed at the last minute. She said the County's 4% accommodations tax would not be collected by the platforms but that the State sales tax will be collected. She asked the Board if we should go for voluntary collection agreements with the platforms or should we just see if the short-term rental board collects the tax. Ms. Vanhooser said she would invite Amy Rohrer from Maryland Hotel Lodging Association to talk to the Board. Ian, Angela, Harold, and Kim volunteered to serve on a committee to discuss how to approach the County Council.

H.B. 1387/ S.B. 628: The bill that went before the House Ways and Means Committee requiring that the Maryland Tourism Development Board to provide grants to nongovernmental tourism organizations was referred for study. It will likely emerge again next year.

Business Appreciation Breakfast: The Business Appreciation Breakfast will be on May 3, 2019. Tickets are on sale now. The winners have been picked. Department of Commerce Secretary Kelly Schultz is the speaker for the event.

IV. New Business

Travel & Tourism Week: The 301 Welcome Center is hosting an open house and it is open to tourism partners who would like to participate.

V. Representatives from each of the towns reported on news and events taking place in their jurisdictions.

VI. The meeting **adjourned** at 9:45 am. The next meeting will be held on May 8 at 8:30 a.m.